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Academic Anti-Semitism and the Austrian School: Vienna, 1918–1945

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Abstract

The theme of academic anti-Semitism has been much discussed recently in histories of the interwar period of the University of Vienna, in particular its Faculty of Law and Policy Sciences. This paper complements these studies by focusing in this regard on the economics chairs at this faculty and, more generally, on the fate of the younger generation of the Austrian school of economics. After some introductory remarks the paper concentrates on three case studies: the neglect of Mises in all three appointments of economics chairs in the 1920s; the anti-Semitic overtones in the conflict between Hans Mayer and Othmar Spann, both professors for economics at the faculty; and on anti-Semitism as a determinant of success or failure in academia, and consequently of the emigration of Austrian economists. Finally, we have a short look at the development of economics at the University of Vienna during and after the Nazi regime.

Keywords: History of economic thought, Austrian school of economics, University of Vienna, anti-semitism.

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1. Introduction

When in 1941, during the Nazi regime, Hans Mayer, the representative of the Austrian school at the University of Vienna, was elected full member of the Vienna Academy of Sciences, its confirmation depended on the judgment of his political reliability prepared by the Vienna section of the NSDAP. Indeed, this judgment turned out rather equivocal, so that Mayer was denied this honor.¹ Among the evidence considered was an anonymous report, which described Mayer and the Austrian School as follows:

He has all the time been a representative of the Marginal Utility School contrived by half-Jews. ... The teaching of this school ... is the most sterile ever experienced in economics up to now. Having been contrived by Jews it is the exact counterpart to ... the mathematicism and logicism of Jewish neo-Kantianism.²

This might suggest a straightforward characterization of the members of the Austrian school as victims of the various strands of anti-Semitism. In the following I shall try to show that the full picture was not just so simple. As regards time and place the focus will be on the interwar period, the phase of the third and fourth generation of the Austrian school, and on the school's fate at the University of Vienna. As is well-known, these two decades mark the rise and fall of the school in its home country, which ended in the emigration of most of its members.

The investigation will proceed in the following steps: After preliminary remarks on the issue of academic anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria, we then take a closer look at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of the University of Vienna, where the economics chairs were located. The core of this contribution consists in case studies from the interwar period, complemented by a short section on the evolution after the *Anschluss* of 1938. The final section attempts to draw some conclusions.

A note of caution is in order insofar as this study cannot provide a full and coherent picture and instead must restrict itself to specific observations. The main reason for this is the fragmentary nature of the evidence, in particular of the relevant archival documents. As, for example, almost all the documents relating to the Faculty of Law of the Vienna University before 1940 have been destroyed in the final phase of the war, we must substitute for this primary evidence the copies preserved in the Ministry files, and scattered remarks in correspondence and recollections.

2. Preliminary Remarks

The increasing weight of anti-Semitism as an element in the political discourse in the German *Reich* as well as in the Austro-Hungarian Empire is so well documented that we need

¹ See Matis (1997, 38).

² See *Gauakt Johannes* [sic] *Mayer*, ÖStA, AdR, ZNsZ, Gauakt Zl. 240.709 (enclosed in the *Gauakt Johannes Sauter*). For the abbreviation of archival sources see the respective section in the references. Here and in the following, if not indicated otherwise, translations from German-language sources are mine.

not go into details here.³ In Austria the most striking example is provided by the campaigns of the Christian Social Party and its legendary leader, Karl Lueger, mayor of Vienna 1897–1910. Within academia, anti-Semitism made itself most strongly felt within the Pangerman movement among students, which propagated the exclusion of Jews and other non-German nationalities (e.g. Italians and Slavs) from the representative student bodies and, eventually, the introduction of a kind of *numerus clausus* both for Jewish students and teachers. For the University of Vienna the so-called “Billroth affair” of 1875 is considered as a vital step in this process of discrimination.⁴

Within the faculties, discrimination against Jews, with regard to academic careers, was common practice both in Germany and in Austria, although varying in intensity. This is demonstrated by the well-known remarks of Werner Sombart and Max Weber.⁵ Turning to the University of Vienna, and in particular to its Law Faculty, we find that at the turn of the century – mostly thanks to the decisions of the imperial Ministry of Education – discrimination had eased and given way to a more liberal policy. Jews and scientists with known socialist leanings, like e.g. Anton Menger, the brother of Carl, occupied chairs at the university. Yet, with only few exceptions, Jews were appointed to a chair only when they had left before the Jewish community and (as a rule) converted to a Christian faith.⁶ Nevertheless, at least at the Law Faculty and some others, discrimination was coexistent with an “over-representation” of Jewish teachers (in relation to the share of Jews in the whole population), a situation quite distinct from that, e.g., at preeminent American universities.⁷

Before going further into details, a difficult problem must be faced that is inevitable when dealing with discrimination and anti-Semitism, namely how to define the Jewish identity. Here, we should first point to the distinction between two types of anti-Semitism, religious (or confessional) and racial (or ethnic): For the former it is the adherence to the Jewish faith (and implicitly to the Jewish community) which defines who is regarded as a Jew – in principle, then, conversion might be seen as a means to avoid discrimination. For the latter, Jews constitute a specific race, supposedly characterized e.g. by an idiosyncratic genetic endowment, different from the non-Jewish, in particular from the Aryan race, so that there is no way to escape from discrimination by choice. Obviously, from the 19th century up to the holocaust, anti-Semitism evolved from the religious to ever more aggressive racist variants.⁸ In this regard, when speaking of the discrimination of Jews, one is often induced to use the language and concepts of the persecutors: The identity thus imputed to the objects of anti-

³ See e.g. Aly (2011) and Hamann (1999).

⁴ See Seebacher (2006) and Rathkolb (2013b, 71-72); on the University of Vienna in general see the contributions in Rathkolb (2013a).

⁵ See Sombart (1912, 82-83), as quoted in Aly (2011, 177), and Weber (1946 [1919], 134): “If the young scholar asks for my advice with regard to habilitation, the responsibility of encouraging him can hardly be borne. If he is a Jew, of course one says *lasciate ogni speranza*.”

⁶ See e.g. Staudacher (2009).

⁷ See e.g. Weintraub (2013).

⁸ For Spann’s construct of a “spiritual” type of anti-Semitism see below.

Semitism is derived from the perspective of the anti-Semites. It was the anti-Semites who singled out and separated, e.g., Austrian Jews from other “nationalities” within the Empire, whereas often the victims themselves felt well-integrated into its existing civil and political institutions and its German-dominated culture. Had it not been for anti-Semitic attacks, many of them would not have considered themselves Jews, not even Jewish Austrians, but simply loyal subjects of the Empire.⁹

3. The Faculty of Law in the Interwar Period

At the Vienna Faculty of Law and Policy Sciences students could earn a degree in either of these two disciplines. Apart from the various law chairs, including those in history and philosophy of law, other disciplines taught at the faculty included statistics, sociology and of course economics.¹⁰ At the end of the monarchy the three economics chairs were occupied by Carl Grünberg (an Austro-Marxist teaching economic history), Eugen von Philippovich (a “socialist of the chair”, yet not inimical to the Austrian approach) and Friedrich Wieser, the heir to the Austrian school, appointed to teach “exact theory”. Between 1917 and 1924 all three chairs became vacant, either through death, retirement or departure, with Othmar Spann, Hans Mayer and Ferdinand Degenfeld-Schonburg their successors.

Having a look at the faculty, and the composition of its members, the following broad picture emerges with regard to its Jewish members (see Table 1 in the appendix):¹¹ The table restricts attention only to professors who made up the so-called faculty council or *Kollegium*. These consisted of “ordinary” (or in Anglo-Saxon terminology: full) professors, typically the heads of an institute or a seminar, and “extraordinary” (or: associate) professors, whose chairs usually complemented the activities of these institutes. This must be strictly distinguished from the mere title of “extraordinary professor” which as a rule was conferred upon lecturers (*Privatdozenten*) after a few years of teaching, yet not coupled with any type of remuneration. Then we see that in 1920 ten of the 22 chairs of the faculty were occupied by scholars of Jewish origin. Of these, four had recently, at the end of the monarchy or the beginnings of the Republic, been appointed or promulgated to an ordinary professorship, namely Joseph Hupka (1915), Emil Goldmann (1916), Hans Kelsen (1919) and Leo Strisower (1922). In the 1920s Oskar Pisko was the only professor of Jewish origin to be newly appointed, whereas seven Jewish incumbents had vacated their chairs by 1930, which left just four in 1938 – all of them were dismissed after the *Anschluss* and none survived the Nazi regime.

⁹ This point has been highlighted by Ash (2013), see also Melichar (2006); on the invasion of Nazi terminology into everyday-language see Klemperer (2010 [1947]).

¹⁰ For a general overview of the faculty in the interwar period see Goller (1997), Schartner (2011), and the contributions in Meissel et al. (2012); on the economics chairs see Klausinger (forthcoming).

¹¹ Typically, German nationalist newspapers published lists of Jewish members of the faculties and warned students against attending their lectures; this might also have been a signal for making them the target of violent disturbances. See e.g. “Rasse und Wissenschaft. Die fortschreitende Verjudung unserer Hochschulen. – 40 Prozent jüdische Professoren”, *Deutsch-Österreichische Tageszeitung (Dötz)*, Oct 13, 1929, and critically “Was an der Wiener Universität möglich ist”, *Neue Freie Presse*, Nov 26, 1929. On attacks against Jewish teachers see e.g. Nemeč and Taschwer (2013).

These statistics point to the fact that during the 1920s within the faculty as well as at the university as a whole the resistance (from Pangerman and Catholic circles) against the academic careers of Jews had strengthened, culminating for some faculties in a kind of *numerus clausus* for Jewish scholars. This attitude was, for example, affirmed in a speech by Karl Diener, President of the Vienna University in 1922, where he regretted that formal restrictions for the admission of Jewish scholars were incompatible with the Austrian constitution, although he regarded the respective demands from the Pangerman student body sensible.¹²

The same tendency expressed itself also in the number of habilitations by Jewish applicants. In the Austrian university system the habilitation, i.e. the acquisition of a lectureship, played a key role for the academic career of young researchers as it constituted as a rule an indispensable requirement for the appointment to a chair. The formal procedure put the decision to award or reject the lectureship into the hands of the faculty council on the basis of (two) reports of its members on the habilitation thesis.¹³ In the Law Faculty during the First Republic, we find five successful habilitations by teachers of Jewish origin: Max Adler (for sociology, 1919), Fritz Sander (1920), Felix Kaufmann (1922), Fritz Schreier (1925), and finally Franz Xaver Weiss (1926). After Weiss – excepting the honorary professorship bestowed on Richard Schüller in 1926¹⁴ – for the remaining dozen years until the *Anschluss* the faculty did not award a *venia legendi* to any scholar of Jewish ancestry.¹⁵

4. The Austrian School and Academic Anti-Semitism: Some Examples

In the following we select some case studies in order to show the role that anti-Semitism played in determining the position of the economists (of the Austrian school) within the faculty. In particular, we examine why Mises was not appointed to an economics chair, the conflict between Hans Mayer and Othmar Spann, and the weight of anti-Semitism for the push and pull that resulted in the emigration of many prominent Austrian economists.

¹² See Karl Diener, “Das Memorandum der deutschen Studentenschaft”, *Reichspost*, Dec 10, 1922, 1.

¹³ For more details see Hayek (1992, 23-25) and Klausinger (2012).

¹⁴ Max Adler (1873-1937) was a theorist of Austromarxism and a leading member of the Austrian Socialist Party. Fritz Sander (1889-1939), a philosopher of law, a pupil of Kelsen turned into enemy, in 1931 became professor of constitutional law at the German University of Prague. Both Fritz Schreier (1897-1981), another of Kelsen’s disciples, and Felix Kaufmann (1895-1949), obtained their lectureship for philosophy of law, were dismissed from the university 1938 and emigrated to the United States; both had also been regular members of the Mises private seminar. Richard Schüller (1870-1972), a senior official at the Austrian Ministry of Trade and honorary professor of economics, was forced to leave Austria in 1938 and emigrated to the United States, too.

¹⁵ See the respective documents in ÖStA, AVA, Unterricht, boxes 609-615. On the *de facto* existence of a *numerus clausus* see e.g. the recollections of J. Herbert Furth, letter to Gottfried Haberler, May 11, 1984, in HIA, GHP, box 14, folder Haag (Furth was Haberler’s brother-in-law and a close friend of Hayek from their student days).

4.1 The neglected Mises

At the end of the First World War, Wieser was the only one of the founding fathers of the Austrian School who was still active in academia, in fact he had reentered the university 1919 after two years spent in the final imperial cabinets as Minister of Trade; Böhm-Bawerk had died in 1914 and Menger lived in retirement until his death in 1920.¹⁶ Of the next generation the most prominent members were Joseph Schumpeter, Hans Mayer, and Ludwig Mises. Schumpeter had been appointed very early to a chair in Czernowitz, then in 1911 against the majority opinion of the faculty became professor in Graz, and after an interlude in politics, as the hapless Minister of Finance in 1919, he eventually retired from teaching for a (still less successful) career in the Austrian banking business. Hans Mayer was the favorite pupil of Wieser, who strongly supported his career. Although in 1912 his habilitation thesis had not yet been finished, Mayer – allegedly with the help of Philippovich¹⁷ – had been appointed as extraordinary professor at the University of Fribourg, and then shortly before the war at the German Technical University of Prague. After spending most of the war as a member (and a colleague of Spann) of a scientific committee at the Austrian War Ministry, he followed in 1921 Schumpeter at the chair in Graz. Ludwig Mises, who had been awarded his habilitation from Vienna University for his important monograph on the theory of money (Mises 1912), worked at the time at the Vienna Chamber of Commerce; among the three scholars he was the most outspoken liberal and, of course, he was the only Jew.¹⁸

In retrospect, people close to Mises, like Hayek and Robbins, claimed that Mises' failure to be chosen for one of the vacant Vienna chairs for economics was based on his being a liberal and a Jew – while one of these drawbacks might possibly have been forgiven, not both in conjunction.¹⁹ This is only half true, in my view. First, there is little evidence that a candidate, of Mises' stature, would have fared better as a socialist Jew (instead of a liberal one). A glance at the table above shows that at the same time as the faculty ceased appointing Jews to chairs it ceased also appointing those with socialist leanings. Indeed, of all the appointments in the faculty after 1918, Hans Kelsen was probably the only one to whom sympathies for socialism could have been attributed, although certainly no party man.²⁰ In contrast, Max Adler (in 1925/26) was denied a chair for sociology to which he had aspired (and for which influential politicians of the Socialist Party had agitated).²¹

¹⁶ By the way, Wieser – in contrast to Menger and Böhm-Bawerk, whom anti-Semitic propaganda depicted both as half-Jews – was himself not free from anti-Semitic sentiment. See e.g. the entries in his diary, Aug 2, 1918, and Jan 31 and July 28, 1919, in ÖStA, HHStA, Nachlass Wieser, and the passages in Wieser (1926, 368-374).

¹⁷ See Zwiedineck-Südenhorst (1957, 185).

¹⁸ Among the pupils of Menger, Robert Zuckerkandl, Professor at the German University of Prague, and Richard Schüller had been Jewish.

¹⁹ See Hayek (1978), Robbins (1971, 107), and Craver (1986, 4-5).

²⁰ See e.g. Olechowski (2010).

²¹ See Siegert (1971).

Secondly, what had been the chairs at stake in the period in question?²² The first one was the succession to Philippovich, for which the faculty finally nominated the German economist Kurt Wiedenfeld and Spann, who was appointed after Wiedenfeld's withdrawal. As this was considered the chair to represent "the practical-political approach" of political economy in Vienna, Mises – who at the time had not published much beyond his 1912 monograph – was not regarded a serious candidate. In the end, however, Spann who probably had no more experience with "practical economic life" than Mises had from his dealings in the Chamber, turned away from teaching economic policy to his own new brand of sociology, "universalism". The next chair to be filled was Wieser's after his retirement in 1922. Indeed, here both Schumpeter and Mises should have been judged as serious alternatives to Mayer. Yet, despite the rather limited extent of his literary production, Mayer was the declared favorite of his teacher Wieser, and the rest of the faculty led by Spann and Kelsen joined him in his opinion. At that time, both Spann and Kelsen had close personal relations with Mayer. In the final decision the faculty put Mayer first on the list, followed by Alfred Amonn and Ludwig Mises as distant second and third.²³ (Spann and others would even have preferred nominating Mayer *primo et unico loco*.) In an accompanying note to the Ministry Spann clarified that he rejected Mises for the extreme individualistic type of his theoretical approach – one might argue that it was not necessary to remind the Ministry of Mises' ancestry. In any case, although from today's point of view, comparing Mises' and Mayer's future scientific performance, one may feel that Mises would have deserved the appointment more than Mayer, this was not a totally irrational decision: Mayer was given priority for the simple fact that as hierarchies mattered he had occupied a chair for almost ten years, while Mises was just an unpaid lecturer. One might, however, point to Mises's lack of patronage, compared with Mayer's, which provided Mayer with an undeserved starting advantage. For the sake of completeness, the succession to the Grünberg chair shall also be mentioned. It was dedicated to represent again a "practical approach" to economics (as Spann had ceased teaching in this field), and thus all pure theorists were excluded from consideration. Eventually, after long drawn out bargaining with the candidates, Arthur Spiethoff, Otto Zwiedineck-Südenhorst and Goetz Briefs, the Ministry chose Degenfeld, mainly for the reason that he was cheap and an Austrian citizen.

4.2 Mayer versus Spann

As noted above, when Mayer was chosen to succeed Wieser as the main representative of exact theory and the Austrian school at the University of Vienna, Spann and Mayer were still on friendly terms. Possibly, despite their opposing views on the nature of economic theory, both may have hoped for peaceful cooperation in the future. These hopes, however, were soon gravely disappointed. Indeed, for most observers, students and others, of the evolution of

²² See on this Klausinger (forthcoming).

²³ Remarkably, in the faculty's final vote to include Mises in the list at third place (with 11 pro and 8 con) of the seven Jewish professors present at the meeting only one (Grünberg) voted against Mises.

economics at the Law Faculty during the interwar period, the outstanding feature was the bitter conflict that developed between Mayer and Spann.²⁴

Mayer being a follower of the strand of Austrian economics associated with Wieser, the main focus of his works rested on the refinements of Austrian value theory, as applied to the phenomena of time, production and imputation. Spann had started his academic career as a statistician in the tradition of the socialists of the chair, yet at the time he arrived in Vienna had come under the spell of the German romantic school, especially of Adam Müller, which led him to develop his own specific approach of universalism, which grew beyond the boundaries of economics to encompass sociology and philosophy in general.²⁵

From Spann's point of view the main conflict in economics, as in all social sciences, was between his own (romantic) view of universalism and individualism. He associated individualism with liberalism as well as with socialism, both following from the same fundamentally mistaken view of society. Consequently he opposed all facets of modernism, liberalism, socialism, democracy and so on, in favor of his own propagated ideal of the corporate state.²⁶ In political terms his view translated into a combination of conservative Catholicism and German nationalism (or Pangermanism), again in contrast to the cosmopolitan perspective of liberals and socialists (where "cosmopolitan" was often nothing more than a code for "Jewish"). Spann's political position was mirrored in his multiple affiliations: In Vienna he was e.g. a member of the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, the *Deutscher Klub*, and the *Institut zur Pflege deutschen Wissens*; in the scientific field he was closely associated with the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Philosophie*, all of which entertained notoriously close relations with the Nazi party in the 1930s.

With regard to the "Jewish question"²⁷ Spann (and his followers of the so-called Spann circle) propagated his own special approach. Accordingly, he postulated a "spiritual" definition of the German or Jewish identity, such that although people are predisposed in their development by their genetic endowment, it is the spirit that shapes the unique character of a person, leaving some margin of freedom. In particular, the essence of the truly German spirit lies in the adherence to the idea of a hierarchical corporate state, while liberalism and socialism are the results of the Jewish spirit. Obviously, this distinction between the German and the Jewish spirit need not coincide with ethnic or racial affiliation (which set Spann in contradiction to the "materialistic" definition of race propagated by the Nazis). This view of the problem led to important consequences. On the one hand, Spann could identify the liberal

²⁴ For example, the conflict is emphasized in the memories of the Austrian economists interviewed in Craver (1986), and in the recollections of Furth mentioned above; it is also noted in the obituaries of Spann and Mayer (see Degenfeld-Schonburg 1952, Oberparleiter 1956, Zwiedineck-Südenhorst 1957). On Mayer see also Klausinger (2013).

²⁵ For biographical information on Spann see Müller (2013).

²⁶ As representative for his early period in Vienna see Spann (1911, 1921). In Spann (1930b, 36) he states simply: "Individualism leads to liberalism; liberalism leads to capitalism, capitalism leads to Marxism; Marxism leads to Bolshevism."

²⁷ See Haag (1973).

Austrian school as an outcome of the Jewish spirit, that is, as being un-German,²⁸ irrespective of the ethnicity of its concrete members. On the other hand, this meant that actual character traits of persons of the German or Jewish “race” need not be fully determined by their ethnicity.²⁹ This permitted Spann, although generally hostile towards Jews (especially in academia), to be selective in making exceptions, and occasionally to cooperate with researchers of Jewish origin and even allow them into his own circle – as e.g. in the cases of Lily Katser, Ivo Kornfeld and Helene Lieser.³⁰ With regard to Germans, it posed the task of transforming those of German ethnicity into “true Germans”. Consequently, as Spann thus believed himself in the unique possession of the key to true “Germanness”, this put him even into the position to aspire to the intellectual leadership of the Pangerman, and in particular of the German Nazi movement – an attempt that was doomed to failure from the outset.³¹

When the opponents Mayer and Spann clashed on the practical issues of academic politics, it became ever more difficult to disentangle the scientific from the political and merely personal. From the point of view of some Pangerman members of the faculty the judgment of Karl Gottfried Hugelmann is enlightening; when speaking of the “grave tensions” within the faculty, he distinguishes between the fight of the “Aryans against the threatening Jewish surge” and the “opposition of Spann and his school to the older approaches of economics”, that is, the Austrian school.³² Yet although there were all too many fields in which the hostilities between Spann and Mayer became visible – e.g. the organization of the *Nationalökonomische Gesellschaft* (the Austrian Economic Society) and of the Viennese *Zeitschrift*³³ – it was the involvement of anti-Semitism that incited the most vitriolic attacks.

One such occasion occurred in the habilitation procedures for Weiss. Weiss had earned his reputation as a pupil of Böhm-Bawerk, the editor of Böhm’s writings (1924) and an adherent to his interest theory. His habilitation thesis (Weiss 1921) contributed to this field. Furthermore, he worked as the managing editor of the old Viennese *Zeitschrift*, which increasingly had become an object of contest between Mayer and Spann. Spann (and other members of the faculty) had opposed Weiss’ first application in 1922, which had then been supported by Wieser, and had been able to delay the decision. When the procedure was resumed in 1925, Mayer replaced Wieser after his retirement and delivered a positive report, while Spann’s was negative. In the end, in February 1926, the faculty with the exception of

²⁸ For such a distinction see e.g. Baxa (1931).

²⁹ On the race question see Spann (1929a, b).

³⁰ See for more details Müller (2013).

³¹ On the futile and self-destructive ambition of Spann (like other conservative intellectuals, e.g. Martin Heidegger and Hans Freyer) to “lead the Leader [i.e. Hitler]” (*den Führer führen*), see Rammstedt (1986, 130, 148-150).

³² See “Darstellung meines geistigen Entwicklungsganges – für meine Studenten”, 194? (ÖStA, AVA, Familienarchiv Hugelmann, box 57). In 1934, Hugelmann, Professor at the Vienna faculty, due to his close contacts to the Austrian Nazis, was dismissed and left the country for the *Reich*, where he was appointed to a chair at Münster.

³³ The *Zeitschrift für Volkswirtschaft und Sozialpolitik* (1921-1927) was relaunched in 1929 under the new title *Zeitschrift für Nationalökonomie*.

Spann followed Mayer and thus Weiss' became the last habilitation of a Jew.³⁴ However, in the meantime, as the procedure had still been hanging on, hostilities between the two main opponents escalated to a new dimension. In November 1925 the Viennese newspaper, *Deutsch-Österreichische Tageszeitung*, the mouthpiece of the Austrian wing of the Nazi Party, published a vituperative attack on the Austrian school in general and on Mayer (and Schumpeter) in particular.³⁵ It repeated the allegations of Menger and Böhm's (and thus the school's) Jewish origin and it castigated Mayer for his lack of serious scientific accomplishments and for his habit of supporting the academic careers of eastern Jews (meaning Weiss and, earlier, Schreier). Although the article was anonymous, it was widely believed that the author must have been close to Spann.³⁶ Similar complaints about Mayer were voiced in a secret session (in December 1925) of the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, a society with the explicit aim of furthering the careers of Pangerman and Catholic scholars, and conversely sabotaging those of Jews, liberals and socialists.³⁷ Again it was Spann who accused Mayer of supporting Jews, and he puzzled over whether this might derive from some psychic or sexual defects on Mayer's side.

The election of the Dean of the Law Faculty for 1926/27 gave rise to another incident. The election produced a kind of scandal over the very fact that the faculty had chosen Joseph Hupka.³⁸ Right-wing newspapers³⁹ and students organized in the so-called German student

³⁴ Weiss soon left Vienna for a chair at the German University of Prague. When Mayer later recommended him for a chair in Tübingen, Haberler noted dryly, "This will fail because of his race." (Letter to Oskar Morgenstern, June 20, 1927, DL, OMP, box 2) In 1908 the same university had rejected a chair for Grünberg, arguing that his "environment and national circumstances are very distinct from ours" (quoted in Brintzinger 1997, 507).

³⁵ "Grenznutzens Glück und Ende. Der ruhmlose Untergang einer vielgerühmten Lehre. – Josef Schumpeter und Johann Mayer als letzte Bannerträger", *Dötz*, Nov 28, 1925, 3-4. The German title is a pun on a drama by the Austrian poet Franz Grillparzer: *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* (King Ottokar's Rise and Fall).

³⁶ See "Wie Professor Spann über seine Kollegen schreiben läßt", *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Dec 1, 1925, 4. Haberler and Mayer himself, in letters to Morgenstern, Nov 30 and Dec 7, 1925, and Dec 8, 1925, respectively (in DL, OMP, boxes 2 and 3), left no doubt that they associated Spann with this attack. The attack was also mentioned, as "inept", in the meeting of the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, referred to below. Moreover, an economic journalist writing for the *Dötz*, Egon Scheffer, was a member of the Spann circle; see Müller (2013).

³⁷ The code name for these groups was "the uneven" (*Ungeraden*). The minutes of this session have been reprinted in Rathkolb (1989, 198), on the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft* see also Rosar (1971).

³⁸ When in 1930 Wenzel Gleispach, the President of the University of Vienna, issued a decree that regulated the representation of students according to their language and national ancestry (the *Gleispachsche Studentenordnung*), which not only would have given predominance to German students but also excluded Jews as an ethnic group from the German student body, Hupka was the sole member of the faculty to protest in public. Others, like Hugelmann, defended the decree. In the end, the Austrian Constitutional Court repealed it for formal reasons. See Lichtenberger-Fenz (2004, 69-70) and for an English-language discussion Marcus (2004); see also the statements by Joseph Hupka, "Die Studentenordnung der

body questioned the legitimacy of a Jewish scholar occupying such a leading position at a German university (like that of Vienna). In this vein, students petitioned the Academic Senate of the University of Vienna, its highest decision-making body; typically, the Senate declined to defend the dean against these attacks, but only declared itself formally incompetent. In contrast, the faculty – in a step allegedly promoted by Mayer – supported Hupka with a vote of confidence. The role attributed to Mayer in this incident instantly drew vitriolic criticism,⁴⁰ which was reinforced when in the following term Mayer himself was elected dean – in a contested vote against a representative of the Pangerman camp, Alexander Hold-Ferneck. This provided the right-wing press with the opportunity to characterize Mayer as a dean dependent on Jewish grace.⁴¹

At this time, at the zenith of his influence within the faculty, Mayer was also full of ambitions with regard to scientific contributions – as the editor of the mega-project of the post-mortem *Festschrift* for Wieser, eventually to be published in four volumes, with his own contribution destined to finally bringing his habilitation project to an end.⁴² In these years he also received calls from highly-reputed German universities, Frankfurt, Cologne, Bonn and Kiel. Although eventually he rejected all of them, he spent 1931/32 as a visiting professor in Kiel before returning to Vienna. Yet, for a host of reasons – his dwindling scientific output (as compared to the prolific Spann’s never ending stream of books and pamphlets), the loss of potential pupils due to emigration, and the drift of the political institutions in Austria, both towards authoritarian rule and compliance with Pangerman sentiment – he found himself soon again on the defensive, as a rearguard of the Austrian school.

4.3. Academic careers, anti-Semitism and emigration.

Another aspect of the conflict between Mayer and Spann was that starting in the 1920s both tried to fill the faculty with lecturers who closely followed their own approach. In this vein, Spann promoted the habilitation of adherents to universalism and Mayer did the same for members of the Austrian school. (One might note that Mayer’s was the more difficult task because the younger Austrians were possibly more varied in their approaches and furthermore some shared a loyalty to their extramural mentor Ludwig Mises, with whom Mayer’s relations were always strained.) During the 1920s Spann was rather successful in promoting members of his circle to lectureships: Jakob Baxa (1923), Wilhelm Andrae (1925), Gustav Seidler (1926), Johannes Sauter (1927), Walter Heinrich (1928), and Klaus Thiede (1929) acquired

Universität Wien”, *Neue Freie Presse*, Apr 23, 1930, and Karl Gottfried Hugelmann, “Das neue Studentenrecht der Wiener Universität”, *Wiener Neueste Nachrichten*, Apr 10, 1930.

³⁹ “Abhilfe muß werden! Was sich Juden und Marxisten an unseren Hochschulen erlauben”, *Dötz*, Sept 26, 1926. – Similar violent attacks had been leveled against the Jewish historian Samuel Steinherz when he was elected President of the German University of Prague in 1922; see Oberkofler (2008).

⁴⁰ “Das Vertrauensvotum für Professor Hupka. Professor Mayer muß sich als Antragsteller bekennen”, *Dötz*, Dec 21, 1926.

⁴¹ “Jüdisches Diktat an der Universität”, *Dötz*, July 12, 1927. Referring to these years, the confidant in *Gauakt Mayer* even speaks of the University’s “Jewish era”.

⁴² See Mayer et al. (1927-1932) and Mayer (1932); note the long delay in the publication of the *Festschrift* originally planned for Wieser’s 75th birthday in 1926.

the right to lecture for such diverse fields as economics, sociology, economic history, policy sciences and social philosophy. At the end of the decade Mayer managed to steer his protégés through the habilitation procedures, too: Haberler (1927), Morgenstern (1929) and Hayek (1929) were the most prominent members of the Austrian school among them. None of them was Jewish. Others, of Jewish origin, were less successful. We will have a look at both these groups and their different fate.⁴³

In the procedures of Haberler and Hayek anti-Semitism did not play a role. Yet in both cases a crucial voting pattern within the faculty emerged. That is, in the discussion in the faculty council as well as in the bargaining preceding it, when the vote between Mayer and Spann was split, it became vital to draw the third economics chair, Degenfeld, to one's side – then, typically, the non-specialists in the faculty did not question the economists' majority opinion. In this way, Degenfeld acquired in these matters a position akin to the median voter. By and large, this was also what happened in the Haberler and Hayek cases. Spann opposed their theses, yet in the end did not enter a negative report but just abstained from the vote. So when Degenfeld delivered his mildly skeptical, yet positive reports, the rest of the faculty followed suit.⁴⁴

The situation was somewhat different for Morgenstern. Morgenstern had been an assistant to Mayer and when the procedure started was just spending a two year Rockefeller fellowship abroad. During his student days, Morgenstern at first had come for some time under the spell of Spann's influence and had even been invited to Spann's private seminar, but turned away from him towards Mayer in 1925, at a time when the tensions between Spann and Mayer just began to increase. Hence, there was some mutual hostility between Spann and Morgenstern. In any case, at least the young Morgenstern had entertained political positions that were not very far from Spann's: He was an outspoken Pangerman, born in Germany, naturalized as an Austrian citizen in 1925, and like Spann a member of the *Deutscher Klub*. In addition, from his diaries we can ascertain that, in particular during the early 1920s, he nurtured anti-Semitic feelings, especially directed against Mises and his group.⁴⁵

⁴³ For the following see Klausinger (2012) and the documents quoted there.

⁴⁴ Since Reder (2000) Hayek's position towards Jews has been questioned in the literature. Yet, Hayek's friends from student days, e.g. J. Herbert Furth (see his letter to Stephan Boehm, Mar 17, 1993, possession of Stephan Boehm), himself of Jewish origin, largely absolve Hayek from this suspicion although he was born into a family where German nationalism and anti-Semitism prevailed. For example, one of the family's best friends and a regular visitor, whom Hayek mentions in his recollections, was Othenio Abel, Professor of Paleontology at the University of Vienna (see Hayek, undated, 18-19), and well-known as a self-confessed anti-Semite. See Klaus Taschwer, "Othenio Abel, Kämpfer gegen die 'Verjudung' der Universität", *Der Standard*, Oct 10, 2012. Hayek (undated, 37) himself recollects the "anti-Semitism in the post-war period", and that "outstanding teachers" were "alleged not to have been promoted solely because of their Jewishness".

⁴⁵ See e.g. Rellstab (1991, 60-65) and Leonard (2004). A particular striking example are the invectives addressed at Mises, when Morgenstern found out that Mises might be a competitor in the application for a Rockefeller fellowship, see the entry in Morgenstern's diary of Mar 16, 1925 (in DL, OMP, box 12).

Morgenstern's application for his lectureship evolved into a formidable battle. From the outset Spann opposed Morgenstern's thesis; when he refused to write a report in time, he was replaced by Degenfeld, who provided a short positive statement; the faculty followed, and that should have settled the case. Yet, at a time when the procedure had already been closed at the faculty level, so that the Ministry's task would only have been to confirm the decision, Spann accused Morgenstern of plagiarism and demanded to resume the whole process. Although these accusations were swiftly rejected by Mayer and Degenfeld, they provided the ministerial bureaucracy with a pretext for delaying its decision for almost a year. In the meantime, Spann forged a campaign aimed to influence the Ministry's position, spreading rumors of Morgenstern being a Jew and a member of the Freemasons. Although this campaign failed in the end, it is crucial to note how in this case anti-Semitism was used as an instrument in an attempt to block the academic career of a non-Jewish candidate.⁴⁶

With regard to Morgenstern this was not the end of the campaign.⁴⁷ When later on as the director of the Austrian Institute for Business Cycle Research, he embarked on two ambitious career projects, the one concerning a leading position in the Association of Austrian Industrialists, the other the founding of a trust company (*Treuhandgesellschaft*), right-wing papers attacked him as a Jew and – ironically – a follower of Mises. In Morgenstern's view that added insult to injury, as he had until recently been on friendly terms with the very groups that now opposed his ambitions. In fact, Morgenstern reacted by asking his father to research the family's genealogy to make sure that he was of purely Aryan descent.

Although the habilitations of Haberler, Hayek and Morgenstern might be considered one of Mayer's notable achievements, its beneficial effects for the position of Mayer and the Austrian school in Vienna proved short-lived. Haberler and Hayek soon left Vienna for careers abroad, and Morgenstern personally and scientifically distanced himself from both Mayer and Mises. In 1929 and 1930, two more candidates of Mayer, both working as his assistants, successfully concluded their habilitations, namely Hans Bayer and Alexander Mahr. Although both may be counted as members of the Mayer circle, and thus of a strand of the Austrian school, their scientific contributions remained modest and their influence parochial.

While young Austrians like Haberler and Hayek, although lecturers at the Vienna University, eventually chose to leave Austria, there were those members of the school for which the ban on habilitations of Jews even prevented them from accomplishing this first

⁴⁶ For a somewhat similar example see the "Pfeifer affair", which Erich Voegelin relates in a letter from 1963 (reprinted in Voegelin 2007, 461-464): He recalls that some members of the faculty suspected him to be of Jewish origin and, in the end, one Helfried Pfeifer amended two references to Voegelin by "(Jew!)" in Pfeifer (1938, 17n.17, 47n.15). Pfeifer had acquired a lectureship in law in 1935 and was appointed to a chair in 1940. See Schartner (2011, 96-150).

⁴⁷ See Klausinger (2008, 36-40). For newspaper attacks on Morgenstern see e.g. "Die Kandidatur Dr. Morgensterns", *Dözt*, March 10, 1933, and "Der Staat schafft Ordnung in der 'Alpen'", *Sturm über Österreich*, Sept 24, 1933, 2, which refers to Morgenstern as the "candidate with the eastern [i.e. Jewish] name".

step. Specifically, this had been the case with Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, Fritz Machlup and Martha Stefanie Braun.

Rosenstein, born in Poland, studied at Vienna University under the direction of Mayer and in 1926 was hired as his assistant. He supported Mayer both in the cumbersome editing of the Wieser *Festschrift* and after 1929, jointly with Morgenstern, of the *Zeitschrift für Nationalökonomie*. During the campaign directed against Mayer by Spann and the right-wing press in the mid-1920s, the attacks focused also on Rosenstein, Mayer's "Jewish assistant".⁴⁸ When Rosenstein put his doctoral thesis on the problem of imputation before Mayer and Spann, the two economics chairs, for appraisal, Mayer graded it "excellent", but Spann only "sufficient".⁴⁹ Rosenstein's main contribution to Austrian economics, the magnificent article on "Grenznutzen" in the *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften* (Rosenstein 1926), was widely acclaimed as a major accomplishment, except for Spann's derogatory critique (Spann 1928, 397). In any case, the campaign against Weiss and the considerable delay in Morgenstern's procedure must have convinced Rosenstein of the resistance to be expected at the faculty, should he dare to apply for a lectureship. As a consequence he took leave from Vienna, supported by a Rockefeller fellowship, and finally in 1931 started teaching at a lecturer position at the University of London.

Fritz Machlup's position was slightly different because he earned his living outside academia, as the owner of a small cardboard factory. He had studied at Vienna University and concluded his thesis under the supervision of Mises (although formally graded by Mayer and Spann)⁵⁰, so with some justification he could be called the only Viennese pupil of Mises, a connection which might have done him more harm than good. Apart from his scientific writings, in the early 1930s he also engaged in lecturing the public on the insights of Austrian economics, in numerous anonymous columns in Viennese newspapers.⁵¹ These activities came to an end with his Rockefeller fellowship, which he spent in Great Britain and the United States. It was probably at this time, in 1933, when he ventured to apply for a habilitation at the University of Vienna. However, his chances must have been nil from the outset: Spann rejected him both as a Jew and as a member of the Austrian school; Degenfeld appears to have been more amenable at first, until he learned of Machlup's Jewish origin, which provided the reason for rejection on the grounds of the (widely believed) "precociousness" of Jews⁵²; Mayer was reluctant to support Machlup because of his closeness to Mises; and finally, there were others, like Richard Reisch, the former President of the

⁴⁸ See "Berufungsmanöver an der Universität. Hervorragender Philosemitismus – hervorragende Gelehrsamkeit", *Dötz*, Dec 30, 1926; the fact is also mentioned in the confidential report in *Gauakt Mayer*.

⁴⁹ AdU, Rigorosenakten, J RA ST 271, 1925.

⁵⁰ AdU, Rigorosenakten, J RA St 102, 1923.

⁵¹ See on this Klausinger (2004).

⁵² Note that Wieser (1926, 373) also refers to the advantage of Jews in comparison to Aryans due to their "more rapidly maturing oriental nature".

Austrian central bank, who supposedly felt badly treated by Machlup in his columns.⁵³ Thus, after the faculty had refrained from any action on Machlup's motion, he chose to withdraw in 1935. At that time, he had already found an academic position at the University of Buffalo.

Not much is known about the ambitions of Martha Stefanie Braun, a doctoral student of Mises and like Machlup a member of the Mises circle. Her monograph, *Theorie der staatlichen Wirtschaftspolitik* (Braun 1929), would certainly have qualified for a habilitation thesis.⁵⁴ But being threefoldly disadvantaged as a woman⁵⁵, Jew and a classical liberal, she possibly never formally applied at the faculty. In the 1930s she lived mostly as a journalist in Vienna and in 1938 emigrated to the United States.

5. Before and after 1938 and 1945

In the 1930s the University of Vienna had experienced a slow but steady process of decline.⁵⁶ At the faculty some highly reputed professors like Kelsen had left, some – with Pangerman leanings – had been dismissed in 1934 for political reasons, and in general the number of chairs had been reduced for lack of funds. The Austrian economics community had suffered from a considerable brain drain, of the better-known members of the Austrian school only Mayer, Morgenstern and Richard Strigl remained in Austria.

The conflict between Mayer and Spann still lingered on, yet due to the political and economic crises of the 1930s no longer aroused much attention from the public. In the course of political events in Austria, Mayer had adapted to the political upheaval, he proved as loyal to the authoritarian Catholic corporate state after 1934 as he had been to the Republic before.⁵⁷ Spann, always eager to promote his own version of the “true” corporate state (different from that built in Austria), had tried to associate his circle with almost any of the then existing movements of the radical right: this included the Styrian wing of the Austrian Homeguard (*Heimwehr*) and the Austrian faction of the Nazi party, Italian Fascism, the Pangerman, and later on the Hitler movement in the German *Reich*, and activities in the *Sudetenland* – in all of which he ultimately failed. In particular, his activities in Hitler Germany, under the auspices of the *Institut für Ständewesen*, brought him into sharp conflict

⁵³ See Machlup (1980, 135-136), Craver (1986, 23-24), letter, Morgenstern to Haberler, Mar 30, 1934 (in HIA, GHP, box 65), and letter, Machlup to Mayer, Oct 21, 1935 (in HIA, FMP, box 52, folder 24).

⁵⁴ For Haberler's very favorable judgment, see his letter to Morgenstern, Apr 6, 1927 (in DL, OMP, box 2).

⁵⁵ Another female Viennese economist, Louise Sommer, had to leave Vienna for Geneva for her habilitation; see Hagemann (2002, 690).

⁵⁶ See the judgment of two witnesses from opposing camps, Mises (1978b, 93-97) and Alexander Gerschenkron (see Dawidoff 2003, 84-89).

⁵⁷ See e.g. “Professor Hold v. Ferneck – der neue Rektor der Wiener Universität”, *Neues Wiener Journal*, June 23, 1934, depicting the loyal Mayer as the rival candidate to Hold who was a well-known Pangerman.

with the ruling hierarchy of the NSDAP, which consequently persecuted Spann and his circle as dangerous conservative dissenters.⁵⁸

So after the *Anschluss* of Austria to the German *Reich* in 1938 curious things happened: As a result of the ideological and racial “cleansing” of the Austrian universities, Spann, the champion of the Pangerman and Nazi press in Austria, lost his chair and ultimately was put under arrest for some months,⁵⁹ whereas Mayer retained his position.

However, Mayer’s position at this time was rather vulnerable. His right-wing enemies had not forgotten his past activities, and in fact we find a long list of his misdoings in the file judging his political attitude towards the new regime (in his *Gauakt*). An anonymous confident aptly describes him there as a “quick-change-artist” (*Verwandlungskünstler*). And indeed, Mayer was quick in adapting to the new situation. At the faculty, within a few days after the *Anschluss* the former dean, Heinrich Mitteis, had been replaced by Erich Schönbauer, an adherent of the Nazi movement, and when Schönbauer fell sick for a few months in the summer of 1938, it was Mayer who served as his deputy (yet, by official order Mayer was finally dismissed as deputy when Schönbauer returned in December 1938).⁶⁰ In the *Zeitschrift* Mayer had greeted the new rulers in a special editorial (Mayer 1938), and swiftly replaced his now unwelcome co-editors, Reisch and Schüller, by prominent foreign economists, like Frank Knight. However, as apparently those new co-editors had not been asked for their permission in advance, Knight felt compelled to publicly declare his refusal to serve in the *Zeitschrift*’s editorial board (Knight 1938). Mayer’s most notorious action occurred when he – as Robbins (1971, 91) put it “to his eternal shame” – as president expelled all “non-Aryan” members from the *Nationalökonomische Gesellschaft*.⁶¹ Yet, in contrast, roughly at the same time, Mayer proved his courage as the author of an obituary of the Jewish member of the faculty, Adolf Menzel (Mayer 1939), whose contributions he praised as a model of “true” sociology. In any case, even now, Mayer’s hostility towards Spann remained unabated. When asked in 1941 by the Dean of Faculty, Mayer wrote a “Short Report on the ‘Vienna School’ of Professor Othmar Spann”⁶², in which he chose a no-holds-barred approach and committed a complete volte-face: He not only judged Spann’s universalism as scientifically without value, but also criticized Spann for his philo-Semitism; he claimed that Spann’s appointment in Vienna had been supported by “the Jewish Marxist dean, Grünberg,

⁵⁸ On Spann’s political activities and failures see e.g. Haag (1969) and Wasserman (2010, chs. 3, 5 and 7). For a voluminous incriminating document on the Spann circle, prepared by the *Reich*’s security agency (the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) see the appendix in Maass (2010), the document and additional material is also preserved in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, “Der Spannkreis” (1936).

⁵⁹ Indeed, there had even existed an order for the *Reich*’s security service (SD) to kill Spann and his son Raffael, see Hachmeister (1998, 15-18) and the letter of the widow, Erika Spann, to the Austrian Academy of Sciences, July 16, 1950, in AdAdW, Personalakt Spann. (This incident had been pointed out to me by Hauke Janssen.)

⁶⁰ See Schartner (2011, 277).

⁶¹ See also Mises (1978b, 99).

⁶² Mayer’s report is preserved in AdU, Personalakt Spann (J PA 396), Akademischer Senat, Studienjahr 1941/42, S.Z. 213.

and the Jewish Professor of Law, Hans Kelsen”, a favor that Spann allegedly had reciprocated by supporting the habilitation of Max Adler, to whom Mayer refers as the “Viennese Jewish Bolshevik leader”. Furthermore Mayer castigated Spann for his misguided position on the race question, that is, for his “spiritual” type of anti-Semitism as being in contradiction to the teachings of the Nazi party.

Almost at the same time, Spann fought both for his rehabilitation and for the pension he had been denied with his dismissal from the university. He did so in correspondence with the *Reich's* offices involved in his case. In a letter⁶³ he pointed to his illegal membership in the Austrian Nazi party since 1933 and presented a long and detailed list of the instances when he had supported the Austrian and German Nazi movement on various occasions. Specifically, he emphasized that he had “fought against the Jewish influence at the faculty, and permitted only Aryan students to attend my seminar and to pursue a doctoral thesis.” Eventually, Spann failed in his attempts at rehabilitation, yet was allowed to spend the time until the end of the war in his reclusive home in Burgenland.

After the war, Mayer kept his chair for five more years until he retired with all the usual honors awarded and was followed by Alexander Mahr, his chosen successor. Mayer contented himself that all he had done had been led by the purpose of securing the survival of the Austrian school and its institutions like the *Nationalökonomische Gesellschaft*.⁶⁴ He remained president of the *NÖG* until his retirement, and after some delays after the war the *Zeitschrift* also started publication.

Spann experienced a more awkward fate.⁶⁵ When the Ministry had to determine whether his attitude towards the Austrian democratic republic would warrant his readmission to a chair at the University, he was quick in providing it with a letter “pro memoria”.⁶⁶ In this letter from Feb 12, 1946, he attempted a wholesale refutation of the accusation of having paved the way for the Nazis and of being an enemy of democracy. Indeed, now Spann found democracy compatible with his ideal of corporatism. This did not prove completely convincing and he was not allowed to teach again at the University, yet neither was he dismissed. In a curious compromise, he was advised to ask for (paid) leave of absence, year after year, which was granted to him until he reached retirement in 1950. He died shortly afterward in the same year. In his postwar-correspondence⁶⁷ Spann preferred to highlight what he considered his achievements as a theorist, and to downplay the political recommendations that might be drawn therefrom. Yet, in the single reference to Mayer in these letters, he still scorns him for his obituary of Menzel, to whom he refers as “a full Jew”, who had helped Mayer to become a member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the full membership of which had been denied to him for all his life.⁶⁸

⁶³ Letter to Dr. Wächter, April 9, 1939, in ÖStA, AdR, Unterricht, PA Spann, Z. 8144/1940.

⁶⁴ See Mayer (1952, 251-252).

⁶⁵ See Grandner (2005, 307-311).

⁶⁶ The pro memoria-letter is in AdU, J PA 396.

⁶⁷ Edited by Müller (1996/97).

⁶⁸ Letter to Hans Riehl, July 1, 1949, in Müller (1997, 23).

6. Concluding Remarks

As pointed out in the introduction, due to the fragmentary nature of the historical evidence, these concluding observations lack generality, but are narrowly related to the case studies examined above. In this regard, we may sum up the following four points:

First, in the interwar period, Vienna and specifically the University of Vienna experienced the growing influence of anti-Semitism in public discourse as well as in practical (academic) politics. One type among its many facets was the evil of anti-Semitism “pure and simple”. This type of anti-Semitism, ranging from the religious to the ethnic or racist variant, was often “naturally” combined with the adherence to Pangermanism or some (not all) strands of Catholic conservatism.⁶⁹ It targeted Jews foremost as individuals, yet often also clung to claims of a Jewish conspiracy, such as the alleged Jewish dominance among Freemasonry or Bolshevism. With regard to the Austrian school this meant that this kind of anti-Semite propaganda would count against the Jewish members of the school, yet could accommodate the school’s economic liberalism in general.

Second, the situation was different with Spann’s and his circle’s spiritual definition of the German or Jewish identity. Here, irrespective of the ethnic or racial affiliation of concrete persons, liberalism and socialism had to be combated because they represented the (evil) Jewish spirit in its purest expression, just as true “Germanness” showed itself in the adherence to the true state of corporatism. From this position it was therefore appropriate to reject the approach of the Austrian school altogether as betraying the ideal of a truly “German economic science” and it was perhaps only natural to use in this battle all the weapons from the arsenal of anti-Semitism. As an example, to denounce Morgenstern as a Jew was therefore – from this point of view – not just an instrumental use of anti-Semitic sentiment, but intrinsically justified as Morgenstern, even if not a Jew by ethnicity, represented the Jewish spirit of liberalism.

Third, there is of course sufficient evidence for what may be called “opportunistic anti-Semitism”, that is, invoking anti-Semitism as a means to destroy the (academic) career of a rival, Jewish or not. Among the cases above, Mayer’s 1941 attack on Spann, where he chastised him (of all people!) for his philo-Semitism might be subsumed under this category.

Fourth, the example of Mayer and to a lesser degree that of Morgenstern demonstrate that among the members of the Austrian school in Vienna we find victims as well as (co-)perpetrators, and also those who, although they lived in an atmosphere strongly contaminated by anti-Semitism, happened to escape largely unscathed.

⁶⁹ In order not to oversimplify the picture, it should be noted that one of the rare cases of serious attempts to protect Jewish students from the insults inflicted on them by their German “comrades” occurred under the Presidency of Theodor Innitzer, then Professor of Theology and later on Archbishop of Vienna. For example, Spann in his 1939 letter boasts that in the Academic Senate he had “defended n.s. [National Socialist] students against their prosecution by Innitzer”.

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BM Unterricht allgemein,
Familienarchiv Hugelmann

Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (HHStA):

Sonderbestände: Nachlass Wieser.

Table 1: Professors at the Faculty of Law of the University of Vienna: 1919-1938: Jewish in italics.

1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	
Moritz Wlassak 1900-1926								Friedrich Woess 1926-1933							Leop. Wenger 1935-1938			X		
Paul Jörs 1905-1925																				
<i>Sigm. Adler</i>		<i>1899-1920</i>			Karl Gottfried Hugelmann ao 1924, 1932-1934								X							
Ernst Schwind 1899-1932																				
Hans Voltelini 1908-1933														Heinrich Mitteis 1935-1938			X			
Rudolf Köstler ao 1913, 1923-1949																				
Gustav Walker 1909-1938																				
															<i>Oskar Pisko 1924-1938</i>			X †1939		
Wenzel Gleispach 1916-1933														X		Ferdinand Kadecka 1934-1940				
<i>Joseph Hupka 1915-1938</i>																				
Hans Sperl 1900-1931																				
<i>Hans Kelsen ao 1917, 1919-1930</i>										Adolf Merkl ao 1920, 1930-1938						X				
<i>Adolf Menzel 1889-1928</i>								Max Layer 1928-1933				X		Ludwig Adamovich 1934-1938			X			
Alexander Hold-Ferneck ao 1912, 1922-1945																				
Othmar Spann 1919-1938																				
Fr. Wieser 1903-1922			Hans Mayer 1923-1950																	
<i>Carl Grünberg ao 1900, 1912-1924</i>												Ferdinand Degenfeld-Schonburg 1927-1938						X		
<i>Leo Strisower ao 1901, 1922-1928</i>																				
												Alfred Verdross-Drossberg 1925-1938						X		
<i>Alexander Löffler 1903-1927</i>																				
Gustav Seidler 1898-1933																				
<i>Stephan Brasloff ao 1919-1938</i>																				
															Ernst Schönbauer ao 1924, 1929-1945					
<i>Emil Goldmann ao 1916-1938</i>																				
<i>Josef Schey 1897-1925</i>																				
										Wilhelm Winkler ao. 1929-1938						X				

Note: “ao” ... extraordinary (associate) professor; X ... dismissal for political or “racial” reasons.